

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

A Message of Hope and Fulfillment For Those Longing For God

In The Darkness a Light Dawns

Luke 1: 57-80

The Birth of John the Baptist

Luke moves quickly from Mary's visit to Elizabeth to the birth of the miracle child John. The angel Michael had instructed Zacharias to name the child John. John/Jonathan means "God has shown grace" or "God has shown His favor." It is evident in the instructions to name this child John that he is bringing the grace and blessing of God to Israel, and though they did not know it, to the rest of the world also. He is to be the forerunner of Messiah, to prepare His way, and in that sense he will herald the greatest good news the world has ever heard. Michael told Zacharias that he would not speak until the day when these things took place (v20) and as soon as Zacharias confirmed that the child's name is "John" his mouth was opened and he was able to speak...and speak he did!

The Prophecy of Zacharias

I. Darkness fills the land—The plight of people then and now, but for God

- A. Darkness is the absence of light and leaves us without direction or definition. Dangers are hidden, objects are distorted (at best), pitfalls are unseen.
- B. Darkness is a metaphor for the moral plight. People have lost their way, they have no compass and no clear sense of spiritual direction, and they sit at the edge of the shadow of death...the long reach of eternity in darkness and judgment without light and without hope.
- C. Because the darkness is filled with hidden danger people SIT and wait. They are waiting for the dawn and longing for the light, even if they do not fully understand what it may bring.

II. The real need is always spiritual—People need redemption and relationship with God.

- A. The theme of Zacharias's prophecy is primarily about redemption, about deliverance from fear, about salvation.
- B. He prophesies that the people will be delivered from fear and will serve in holiness and righteousness.

III. The real answer is always JESUS—The Messiah is the Hope of the world

- A. John's mission is to prepare the way of the LORD, to bring a message of repentance and forgiveness getting the heart ready for the visit from God.
- B. Jesus is the Light of this world, He is the Sunrise from on High. Even here the incarnation is in mind as the One from Beginning comes from the Father to reach us!

Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had displayed His great mercy toward her; and they were rejoicing with her. ⁵⁹ And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father. ⁶⁰ But his mother answered and said, "No indeed; but he shall be called John." ⁶¹ And they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name." ⁶² And they made signs to his father, as to what he wanted him called. ⁶³ And he asked for a tablet and wrote as follows, "His name is John." And they were all astonished. ⁶⁴ And at once his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to speak in praise of God. ⁶⁵ Fear came on all those living around them; and all these matters were being talked about in all the hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶ All who heard them kept them in mind, saying, "What then will this child turn out to be?" For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.

And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: ⁶⁸ "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, ⁶⁹ And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of David His servant— ⁷⁰ As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old— ⁷¹ Salvation FROM OUR ENEMIES, And FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US; ⁷

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